

Precise Plan for El Camino Real

***Framework
for the
Update of the Precise Plan***

November 2005

Purpose

The purpose of the Precise Plan is to serve as a guide to encourage well designed, appropriate developments along El Camino Real. The Precise Plan offers strategies to capitalize on the strengths of El Camino Real and to overcome the limitations in order to enhance the ability of the corridor to remain a vibrant and successful part of the city.

A Vision for El Camino Real

Sunnyvale's El Camino Real, or "Highway of the King," will continue to be the commercial spine of the City as well as a main transportation corridor through the City. This street will include areas specifically zoned for commercial/retail use and several areas (or nodes) that provide a higher concentration of mixed uses. The street will continue to be a major destination in the city, providing desirable services in inviting, well-planned, human-scale developments.

The street will include sites for local as well as chain and franchise businesses which will be ethnically diverse with a full range of local and region-serving retail. Large retail centers will be encouraged on larger sites and may incorporate high density residential components for sites at the major intersections. Smaller, independent businesses will be located within large projects and on smaller properties located between the higher density nodal areas.

The nodes will be distinctive in use and design from the Downtown; however, the central node will establish a strong relationship and interconnection to the multi-modal transportation center and Downtown.

Auto dealerships will continue to maintain a significant presence along the street in modern, updated buildings. These dealerships will remain clustered in two main areas of the street: at the west end and in the middle of El Camino Real.

The street will continually be improved to provide good traffic flow, while also encouraging enhanced access for walking, bicycling and public transportation, including shuttles and buses.

Varying setbacks along the street will avoid large areas of parking in the front of the properties yet will provide a more inviting and human-scale street, especially at the nodes at major intersections. Architectural styles will emphasize the uniqueness of the site and use, and no one architectural style will predominate.

"Corporate" designs, lacking in character and individual quality, will be strongly discouraged. Gateways and/or banners will be used to identify the entry to the City.

The street has accumulated some less desirable uses over the years which detract from this vision. These uses, such as stand-alone fast food restaurants and stand-alone automobile service and repair shops are more appropriate in other areas of the City; support will be provided in other planning documents to locate these uses in such other locations.

The strategy for development of the corridor is to manage change along the street in a manner that creates positive benefits, without displacing valuable uses and buildings. El Camino Real needs to retain existing viable uses, accommodate new uses, attract new investment and promote economic vitality.

Policies

The following policies provide the overall context for use and development along El Camino Real.

ECR 1. Create and maintain properties large enough to accommodate significant retail and mixed-use developments.

ECR 2. Encourage a mixture of retail and highway oriented uses (e.g. restaurants, hotels) along El Camino Real which contributes to the vision and complement each other.

- a. Free standing and strip retail
- b. Restaurants
- c. Big box retail
- d. Gas stations
- e. Hotels/motels
- f. Auto dealerships
- g. Mixed use, including residential

ECR 3. Discourage uses which do not contribute to the vision:

- a. Stand-alone fast food restaurants under 3,500 s.f.
- b. Independent auto repair
- c. Places of Assembly
- d. Additional grocery stores (which are better distributed throughout the city to be proximate to their patrons)

- e. Free-standing mid-block residential fronting on the street
- ECR 4. Support reinvestment in the existing businesses located on El Camino Real.
- ECR 5. Provide additional opportunities for new business types which serve the entire Sunnyvale market to locate on El Camino Real.
- ECR 6. Maintain an environment rich with street trees and median landscaping.
- ECR 7. Support pedestrians and transit_users through well designed sidewalks, lighting and bus stops.
- ECR 8. Require properties along El Camino Real to provide ample landscaping to soften the affects of paving and buildings and to buffer adjacent residential developments.
- ECR 9. Assure that landscaping enhances a site without negatively affecting the visibility of uses on a property.
- ECR 10. Bring added energy along El Camino Real by allowing mixed use residential developments when there are no significant impacts to adjacent uses.
- ECR 11. Allow stand-alone residential only on residentially zoned properties.
- ECR 12. Encourage developments which support the use and promotion of public transit.
- ECR 13. Assist property owners in the nine Opportunity Areas in meeting the vision for El Camino Real.
- ECR 14. Encourage mixed use or big box development and/or pedestrian-friendly projects at Nodes.
- ECR 15. Provide incentives for development in Opportunity Areas and Nodes to achieve the vision for El Camino Real.
- ECR 16. Discourage subdivision of properties unless it is to support ownership of redeveloped sites.
- ECR 17. Encourage the mergers of small properties in order to create sites large enough to support major new development.

ECR 18. Encourage high volume retail uses on small properties.

ECR 19. Restrict commercial access from adjacent residential neighborhood streets and consider residential-only access to those streets for mixed use projects.

ECR 20. Provide additional signage or other features that identify the gateways to the City.

Development Criteria

Development Criteria are zoning standards such as setback, lot coverage, height, bulk, landscaping etc. These criteria tend to be measurable.

DC 1. Require a minimum lot size of two acres to make larger properties available for larger users or developments.

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines are general principles to achieve the desired visual affect and relate to architecture, site planning and landscaping. These criteria tend to be subjective.

The following list includes recommended development guidelines and a list of further actions to prepare final guidelines for El Camino Real (*in italics*).

DG 1. Reduce front setback for buildings at major intersections to create a more intimate feel at the street and to encourage a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

DG 2. Locate smaller buildings close to the street.

DG 3. Allow smaller buildings immediately adjacent to the street as part of big box developments to maintain the desired streetscape along El Camino Real. These types of buildings can help bring a more pedestrian feel to the street while still encouraging the larger businesses.

DG 4. *Develop Guidelines for the following types of development:*

- a. *General Design Guidelines*
- b. *Streetscape Design Guidelines*
- c. *Big Box Guidelines*
- d. *Strip Center Guidelines*
- e. *Access and Parking along the street with provisions for:*
 - i. *on-street parking*
 - ii. *driveway access for shared parking situations and*
 - iii. *access for those properties with residential uses.*
 - iv. *loading zones for the auto dealerships.*

DG 5. *Consider preparation of criteria for special paving areas which tie El Camino Real to downtown and to bus and train lines.*

DG 6. *Develop specific guidelines, incentives and/or considerations for Opportunity Areas and Node.*

Implementation

Implementation includes programs, studies and activities to assist in accomplishing the vision for El Camino Real. The following actions would be further developed for the final Precise Plan.

Incentives: Prepare incentives such as reducing certain requirements for new development along El Camino Real. These incentives could occur for all projects, or just in Opportunity Areas and/or Nodes. Examples include:

- a. Higher density
- b. Reduced setbacks
- c. Removal of the public art requirements in favor of contributing to El Camino Real Gateway features
- d. Modified landscaping requirements
- e. Reduced fees for new projects
- f. Expedited project processing

Rezoning: Consider rezoning all properties within the El Camino Real Precise Plan to include the ECR Combining District designation.

Marketing Program: Prepare a marketing program to:

- a. Attract the type of businesses to El Camino Real which not only add tax income to the city, but also increase interest in the street and attract other businesses.
- b. Promote community-wide retail (not neighborhood retail uses), including big box retail, auto dealerships, hotels, etc.
- c. Promote uses that require high visibility and traffic volumes. Develop methods of attracting large retail businesses to El Camino Real without removing opportunities for local businesses and those that serve the different ethnic sectors of the community.
- d. Prepare guidelines for signage, banners or other features that identify entry to the City.

Study the Downtown to El Camino Real Tie-in: Although the Downtown redevelopment is not immediately adjacent to El Camino Real, there may be methods of tying the two together, especially to the proposed "node" between Mathilda and Sunnyvale Road.

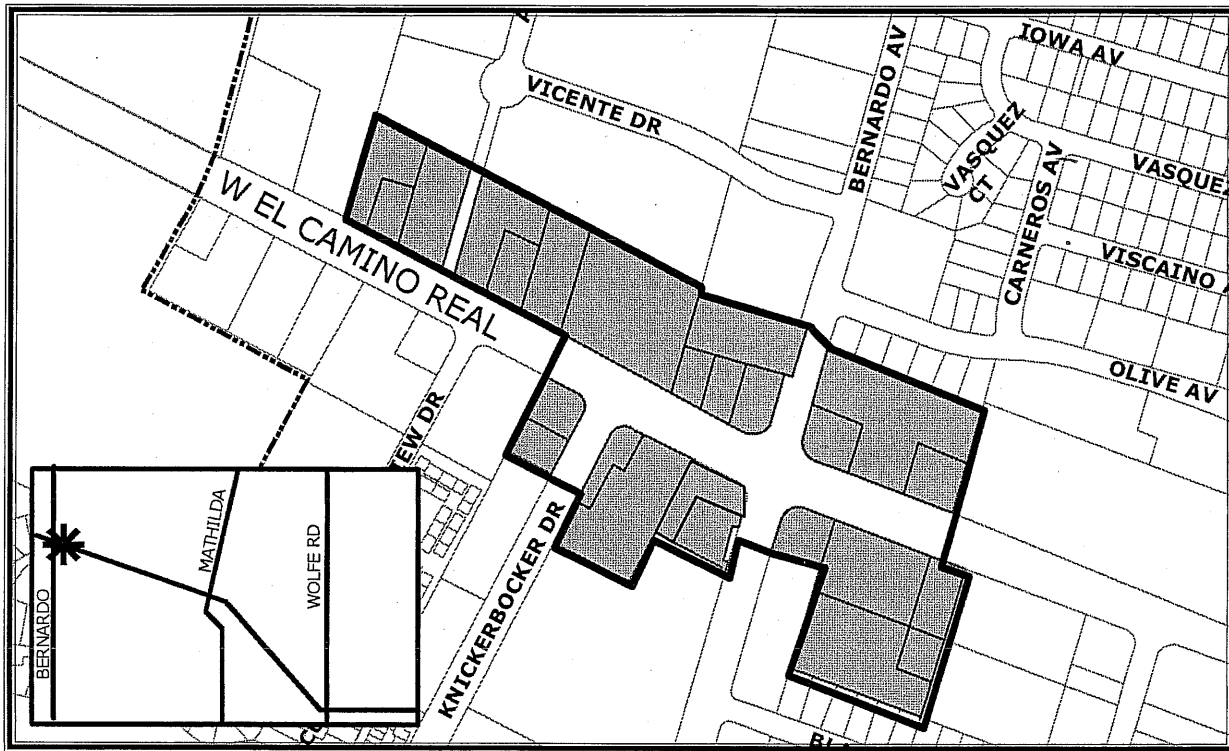
Long-term Presence of Auto Dealerships on El Camino Real: There is a push in neighboring communities to move the auto dealerships from El Camino Real or other streets to freeway property in order to take advantage of the easy access and visibility. A Study Issue about this issue is being proposed to City Council.

Opportunity Areas and Nodes

Opportunity Areas: The Opportunity Areas target properties which are underutilized or in poor condition. Specific guidelines could be described for individual properties, and incentives or special considerations could be included to meet the goals of the Precise Plan.

Nodes: A node is an area along El Camino Real which could be a location of higher density, mixed use developments. Nodes are located at major intersections along El Camino Real to bring a more integrated development design. An example of the type of development envisioned at a node is the Cherry Orchard project. Nodes could be enhanced with public improvements

Opportunity Area A: This is the west entry to the City and includes properties at the intersection of El Camino Real and Bernardo Avenue. Properties considered for attention include the vacant Stroud's building, the Good Guys Plaza and the auto repair facilities along both sides of the street. This opportunity area may also be considered a "node" for the City (see next item 2), but also includes property which may not be included in the node.



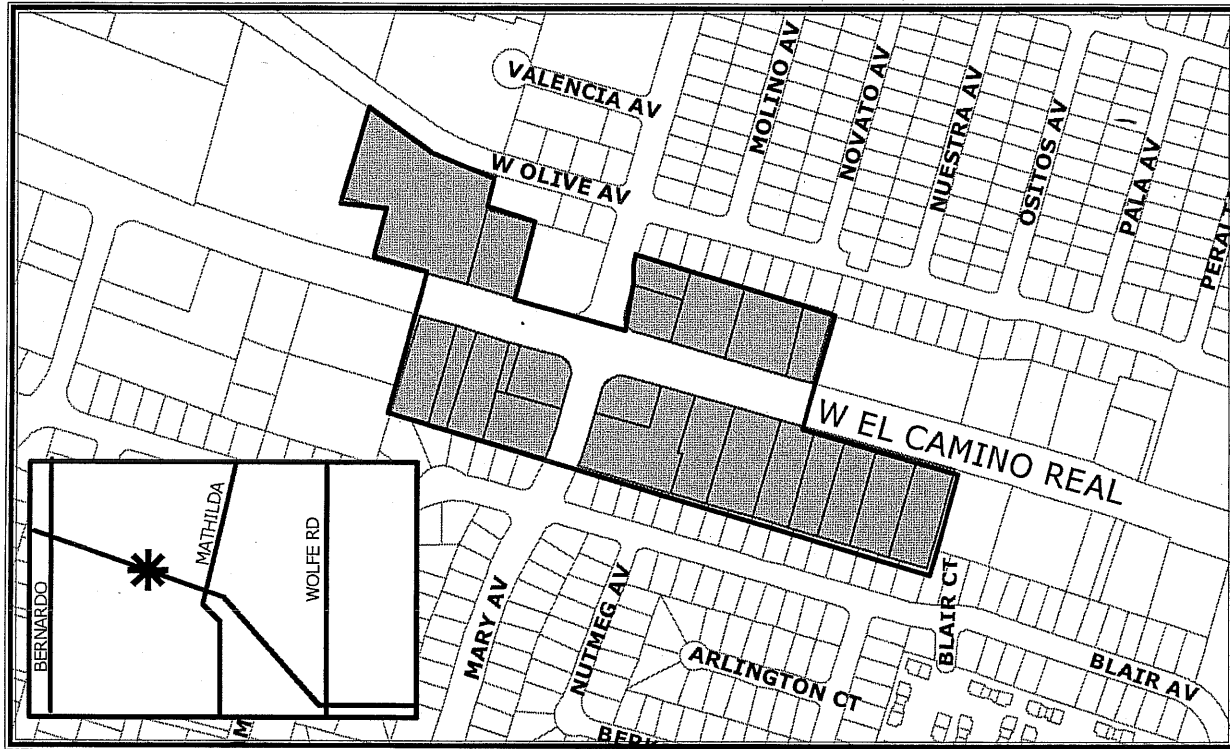
Desirable Land Uses •

Special Considerations •

Incentives •

Comments •

Opportunity Area B: This includes the properties around the El Camino Real and Mary Avenue intersection, as well as those extending down El Camino Real towards Hollenbeck. These include the property currently being used by Chrysler for their used car sales, the commercial areas on either side of Mary Avenue along the south side of El Camino Real and the used car dealerships on the north side of the street.



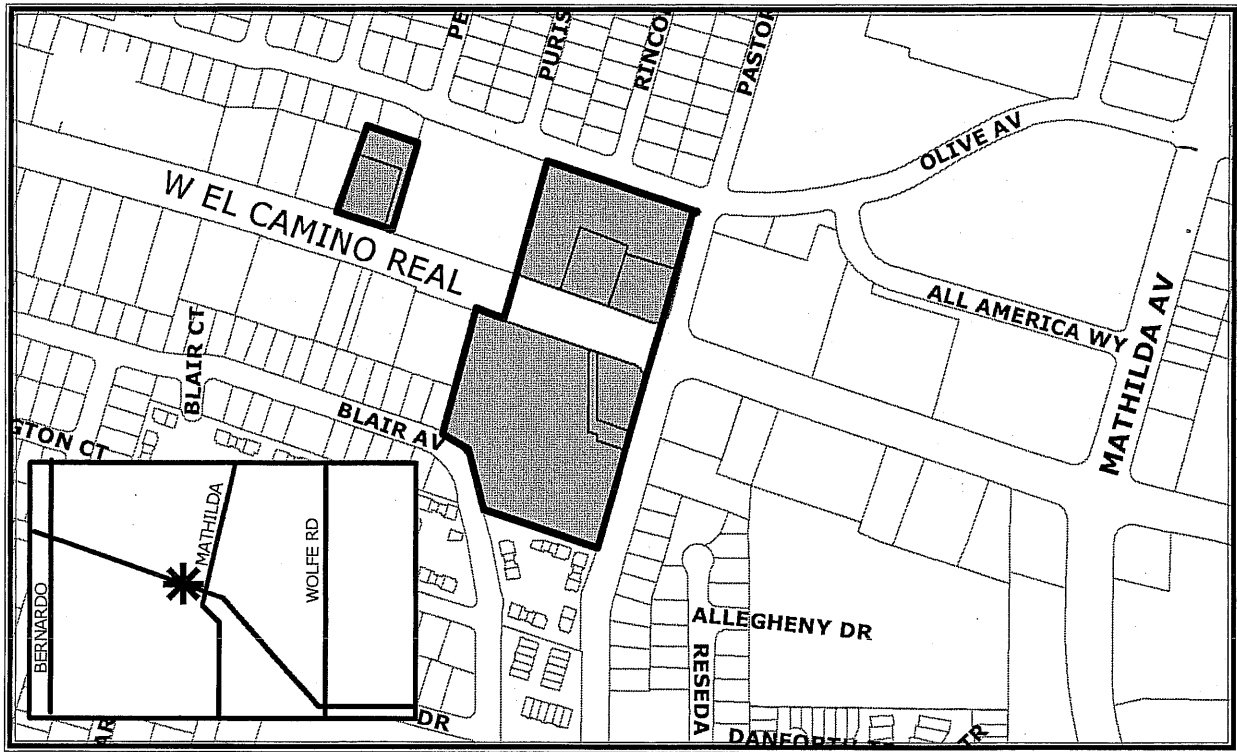
Desirable Land Uses •

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Opportunity Area C: This area includes the Color Tile property and the 6-unit apartment complex behind it and the shopping centers on both sides of El Camino Real west of Hollenbeck/Pastoria Avenue



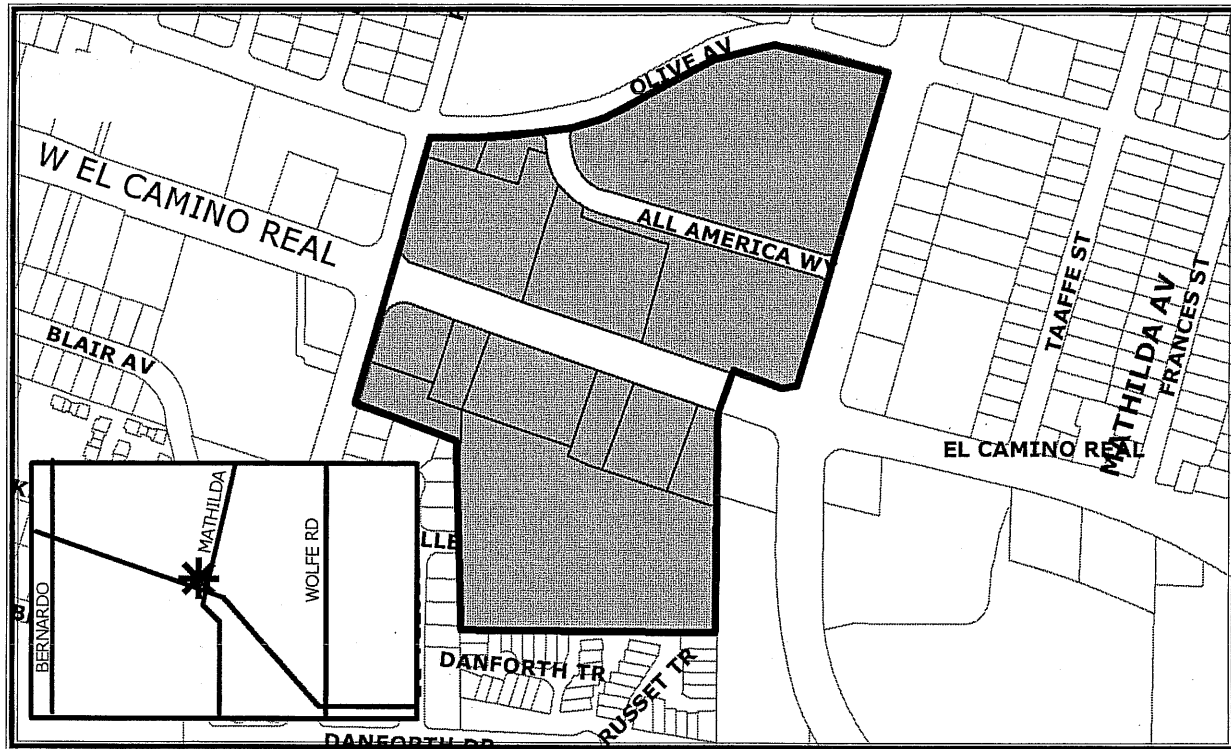
Desirable Land Uses •

Special
Considerations •

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Opportunity Area D: The property between Hollenbeck/Pastoria Avenues and Mathilda Avenue make up this area. The properties include those along the south side of El Camino Real, such as the auto dealerships. The area also includes the Civic Center. This area, along with Opportunity Areas E and F could be considered part of a "node" along the street.



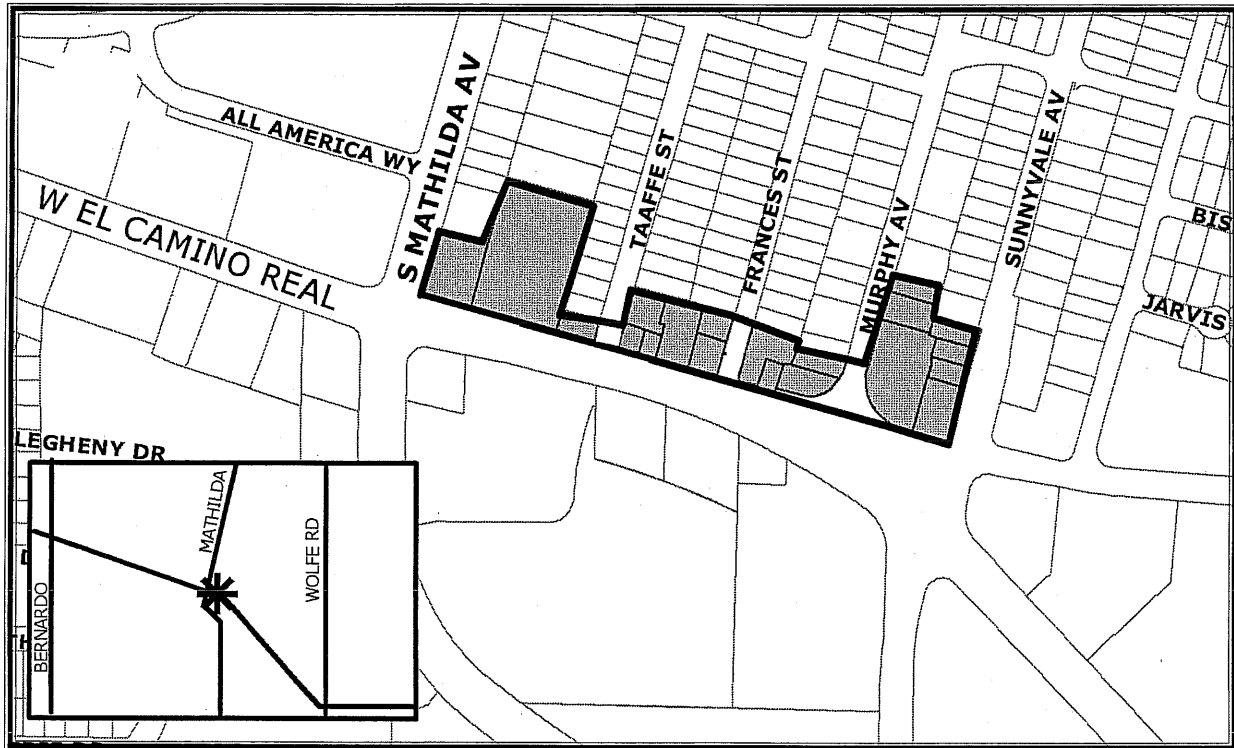
Desirable Land Uses •

Special Considerations •

Incentives •

Comments •

Opportunity Area E: This opportunity area along the north side of El Camino Real between Mathilda and Sunnyvale Avenues provides some of the greatest challenges in redeveloping the area, mainly because of the many small and shallow lots with residential uses directly behind the properties. The properties include several small retail businesses, a used car dealership, restaurants and a strip shopping center.



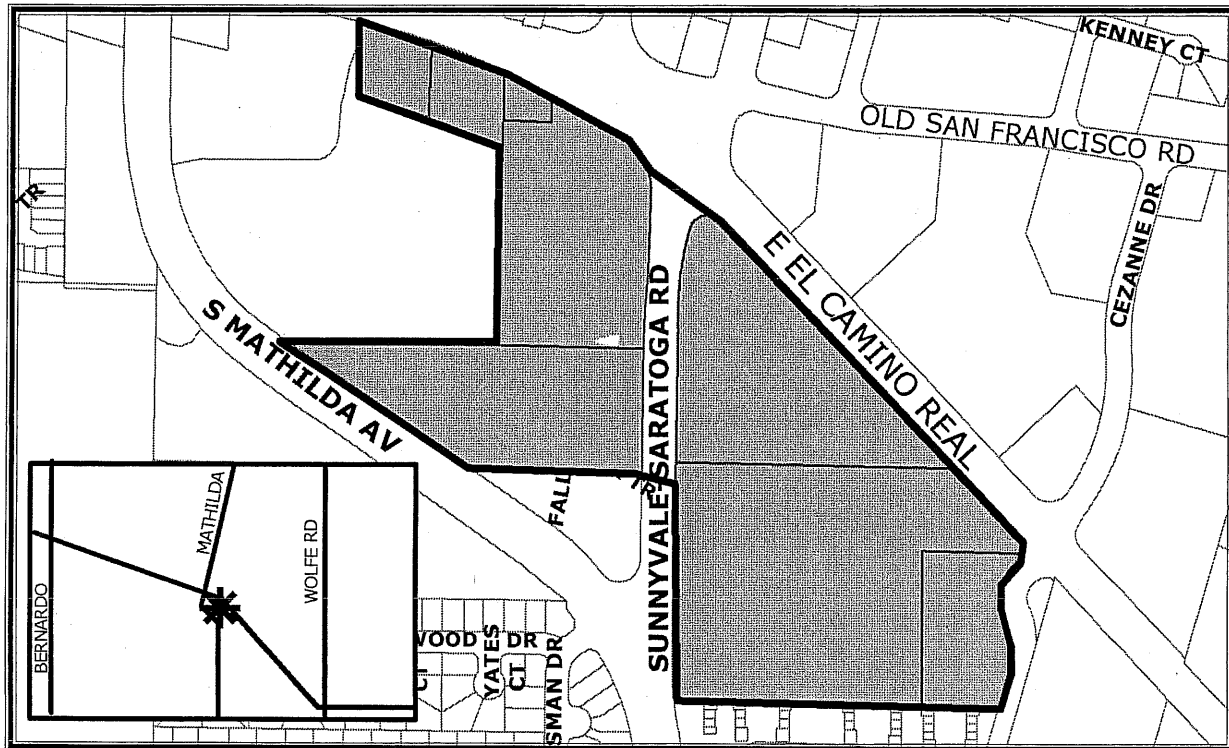
Desirable Land Uses •

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Opportunity Area F: This area is on the south side of El Camino Real on either side of Sunnyvale Saratoga Road, and includes the Big 5 shopping center, OSH and the large retail center which currently houses Firestone Tires, Toys "R" Us, Pak'n Save and Pep Boys.



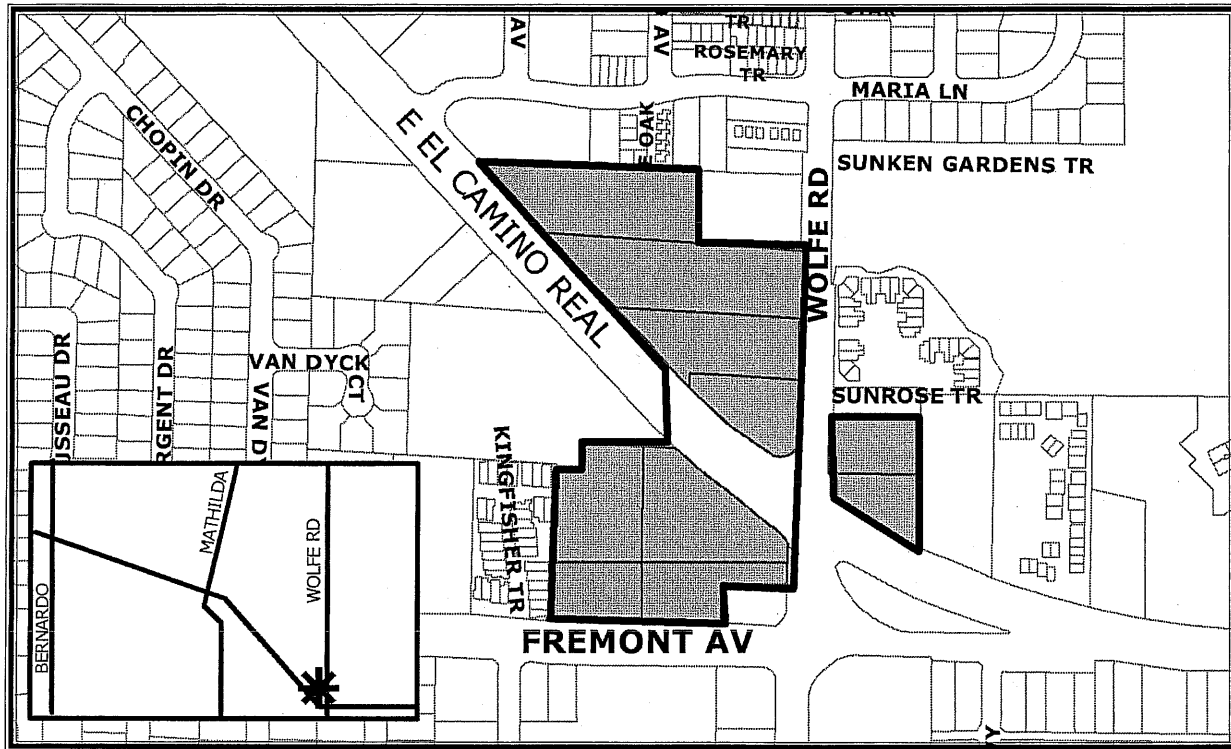
Desirable Land Uses •

Special Considerations •

Incentives •

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Opportunity Area G: This area includes the property around the intersection of Wolfe Road and El Camino Real including: Golfland, Summerwind's Nursery and the gas station and strip shopping center along the north side of the street, and the unincorporated property on the south side of El Camino Real west of Wolfe Road. This is another possible "node" location.



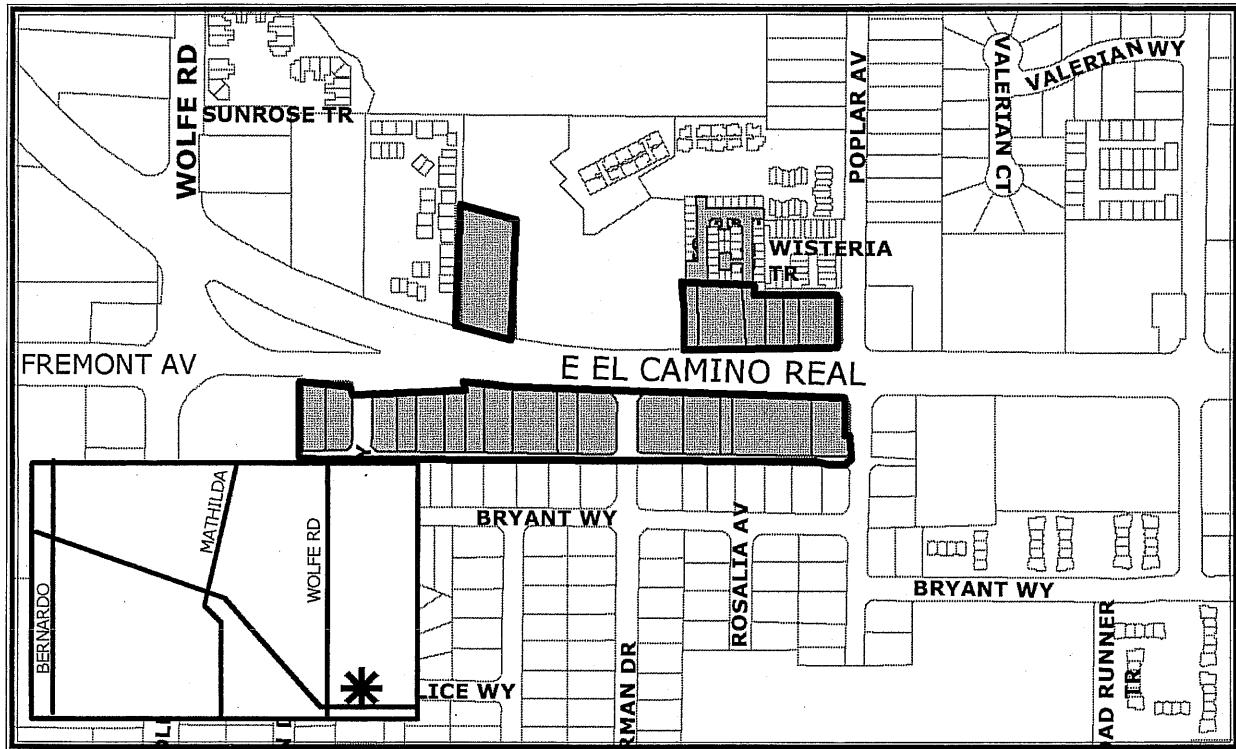
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Special Considerations •

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Opportunity Area H: The area is made up of properties along the south side of El Camino Real between the Wild Palms Hotel and Poplar Avenue, as well as the non-residential properties along the north side of the street. The south side includes many small properties of various uses, while the north side includes the U-Haul, the car wash, Santa Clara Cycles and Kelly-Moore Paint properties.



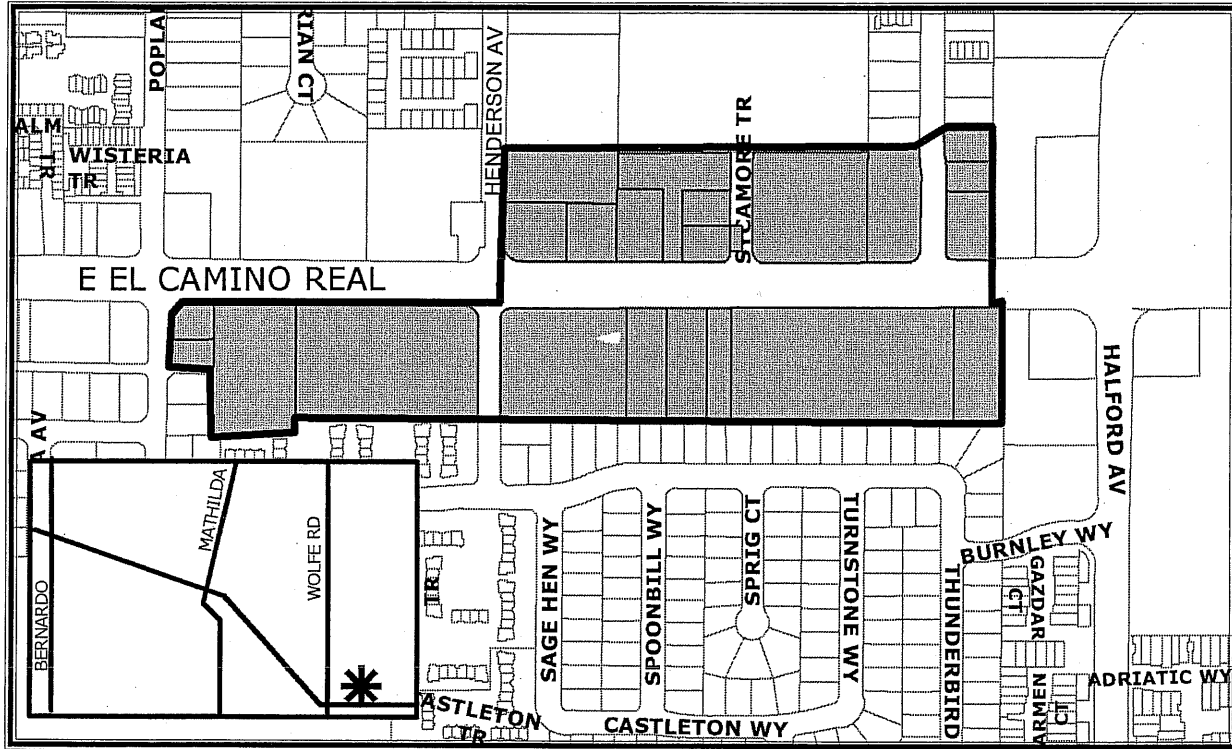
Desirable Land Uses •

Special Considerations •

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Opportunity Area I: This area is the eastern entry to the City. The properties include those between the City boundary with Santa Clara to Poplar Avenue, and include the trailer park, Volkswagen and the strip centers found in the area.



Desirable Land Uses •

Special Considerations •

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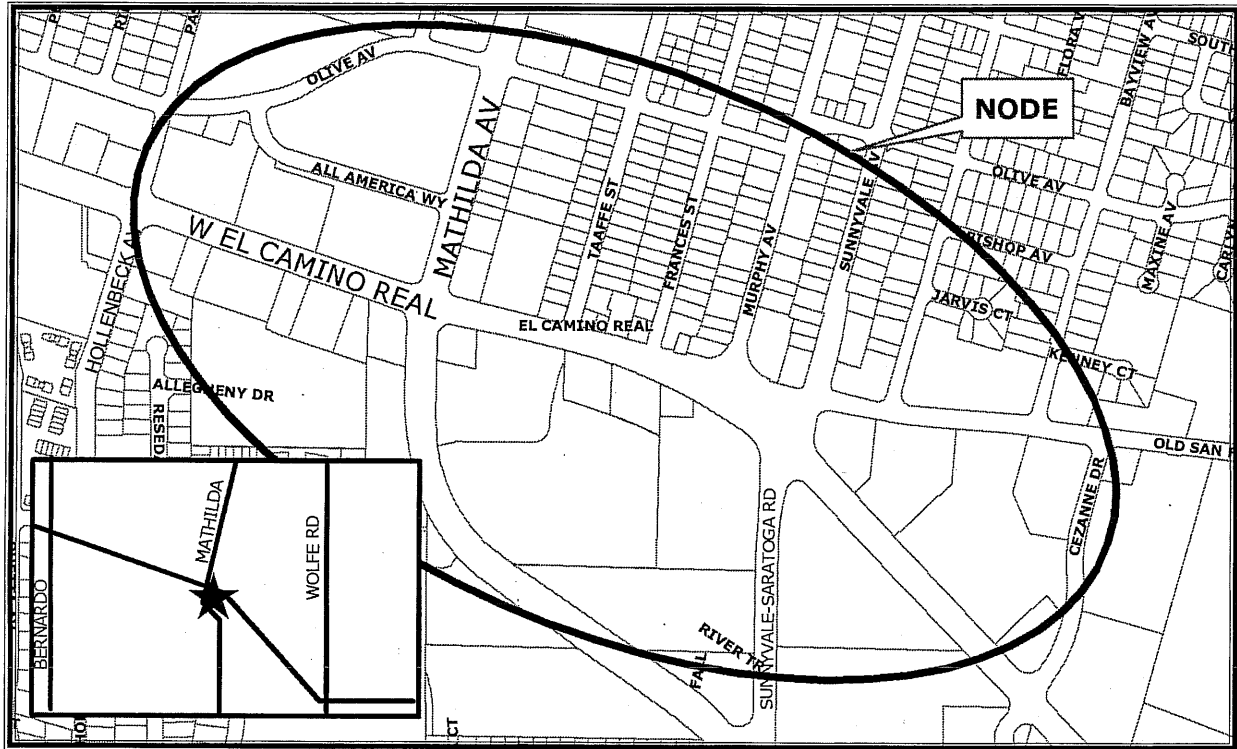
Western Node: This western node is the first major intersection on the west end of El Camino Real. This node includes Opportunity Area A and is applicable to the properties supporting the El Camino Real and Bernardo Avenue intersection.



Private Enhancements •

Public Enhancements •

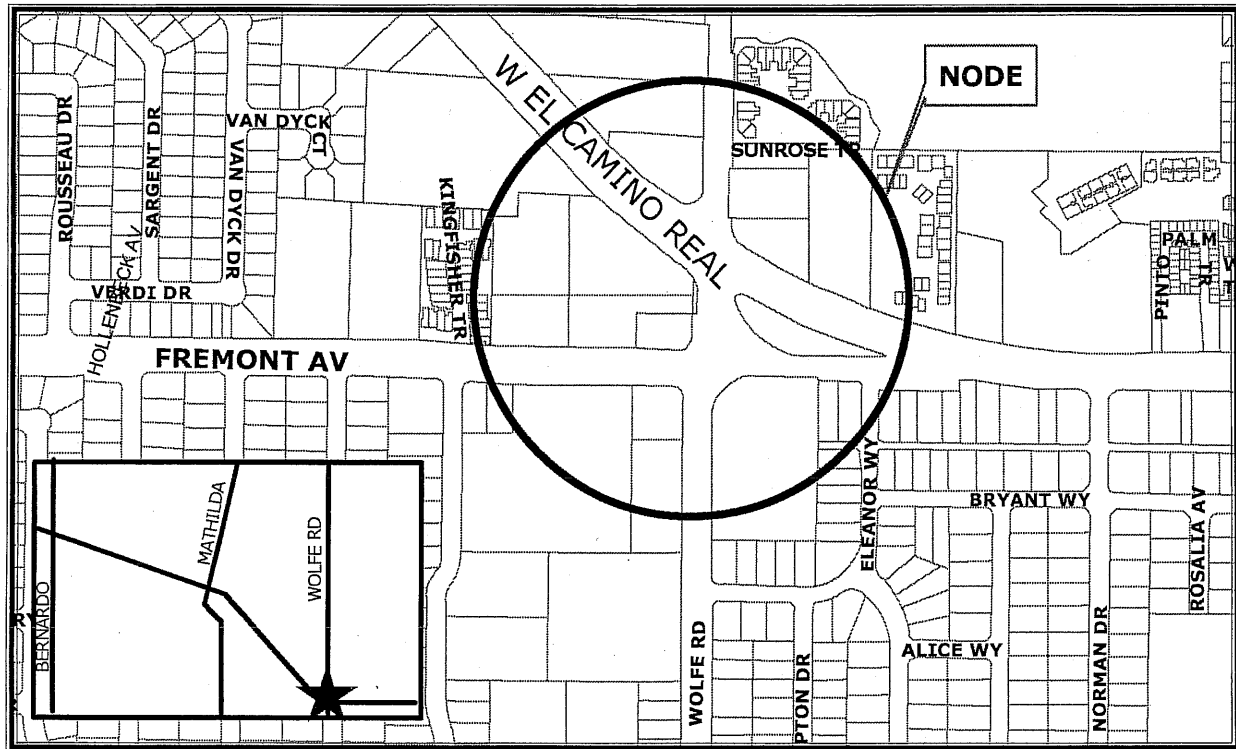
Central Node: This node stretches from the Mathilda intersection to the Sunnyvale-Saratoga/Sunnyvale Avenue intersection. Imbedded in this node are Opportunity Areas X and Y.



Private Enhancements •

Public Enhancements •

Eastern Node: This node is located at Wolfe Avenue intersection. Wolfe Road is a significant north-south corridor in the city. This node includes Opportunity Area G.



Private Enhancements •

Public Enhancements •